

27 August 2020

Ms Kirsteen Mackay  
Government Architect  
ODASA Consultation  
28 Leigh Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Ms Mackay

### **Draft Local Design Review Scheme**

The Planning Institute of Australia SA (PIA) would like to thank ODASA for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Local Design Review Scheme within our State's new planning system under the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 ("the PDI Act").

PIA supports the inclusion of a formal design review mechanism which is available to all Council areas within South Australia. We commend ODASA for the considerable efforts that have been undertaken to ensure that the structure of the Scheme is consistent with the intent under the PDI Act. This is an innovative step towards the provision of pre-application advice on design matters for a range of development types in Council areas which do not have any form of design review process.

It can be challenging for some relevant authorities to obtain a diversity of expert design advice in-house, particularly in regional SA. This Scheme creates an opportunity, in our view, for Council's to promote improved design outcomes for forms of development which are relevant to each region or locality. One of the benefits of the scheme is the opportunity for Council's to create regional Design Panels which would allow the pooling of resources and greater access to a diverse range of design expertise.

PIA is concerned that the scheme may not serve its intended purpose if a panel is limited to only one design expert undertaking a review. It is recommended that ODASA consider amending the scheme to introduce a minimum of three (3) design experts per Panel. It will be important to include a diversity of professions, such as Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design in order to encourage the development industry to utilise the service to its full potential.

Whilst the provision of the scheme is mandated by the PDI Act and consequently has some force and effect in planning law terms, there appears to be little statutory weight to the role of the scheme within the Planning and Design Code itself, other than the requirement for Relevant Authorities to take into account the advice given by the panel.

It is our view that the effectiveness of any advice given by appointment panel members would need to be fully cognisant of the implications of specific policy wording within the relevant policies which are triggered by a 'form of development' within the Code. If the policy wording falls short of the advice it could undermine the benefits of the scheme and result in frustration from proponents. It is our view that the advice should be framed within the context of standardised code policy.

As the Scheme is not mandatory and its success is contingent on the positive take up by the private sector, it is our advice that ODASA consider including an overall review timeframe to provide proponents with a level of certainty should they choose to use the pre-application service.

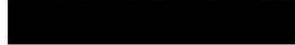
PIA supports the concept of the formal scheme to provide rigour around the quality of the design of a project before it is lodged for assessment. It is well known that applications that are 'assessment ready' have a much better chance of obtaining support from relevant authorities and this Scheme, if administered well, could have a positive impact on development outcomes within the State.

As the Scheme states that Relevant Authorities must take into account the design advice given by the expert panel, it is important that planners be involved in the process to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how the design team arrived at an outcome. We are not necessarily advocating that planners be appointed to the panel directly, as we understand that the purpose of the scheme is for specific design experts to provide pre-application advice. However, to ensure that a development application is truly 'assessment ready' it would be useful if planning staff can attend pre-briefing meetings and be privy to the advice of the Panel. It is important that Planner's role in co-ordinating pre-application advice is maintained and supported.

Participation in the process could also provide valuable learnings to assessment staff, particularly in the scenario where a decision is appealed to the Environment Resources and Development Court.

We acknowledge that the scheme will evolve with implementation and testing and as such PIA is happy to continue to work with ODASA on any future refinements of the Scheme.

Please feel free to contact the undersigned if any further comment is sought via



Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elinor Walker'.

Elinor Walker  
PRESIDENT - SA DIVISION

